

# Hunter Miller Park

## History and Character

Hunter Miller Park is located at 224 North Fayette Street in the West Old Town neighborhood. There are no documented historic sites within the park.

The park is named for community activists and long-time City residents Bernard Hunter and Helen Miller, the first African Americans to have a park named after them in Alexandria. Bernard Hunter was a member of the Police Department's Community Action Team and worked to ensure that the playground that now bears his name had proper and safe equipment. Helen Miller was an advocate for children and families in Alexandria, her life-long home, and a member of the Hopkins House Board.

The park is 0.32 acres and features large shade trees, benches, a basketball court, and playground. The basketball court has lights for evening and nighttime play and during the summer there is league play under the lights.

The playground, renovated in 2008, is intended for ages 2-15 and consists of standard play equipment, swings, and rubberized surface. The park is a popular spot for residents, daycare facilities, and tourists given the proximity to the King Street shopping and restaurant corridor just two blocks south.



## Existing Conditions Map



# Hunter Miller Park

Which of the following existing park elements would you like to preserve, enhance, or transform?

Element Number of responses	Trashcan 8		Element Number of responses	Benches 9	
Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
Preserve it	7	87	Preserve it	5	56
Enhance it	1	13	Enhance it	4	44
Transform it	0	0	Transform it	0	0

  

Element Number of responses	Park sign 8		Element Number of responses	Playground 9	
Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
Preserve it	8	100	Preserve it	5	56
Enhance it	0	0	Enhance it	3	33
Transform it	0	0	Transform it	1	11

  

Element Number of responses	Fence 8		Element Number of responses	Paths 8	
Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
Preserve it	8	100	Preserve it	8	100
Enhance it	0	0	Enhance it	0	0
Transform it	0	0	Transform it	0	0

  

Element Number of responses	Basketball Court 8	
Value	Count	Percent
Preserve it	7	88
Enhance it	0	0
Transform it	1	12

## What is currently NOT in the park that you would like to see there?

1. Perhaps additional features for kids to climb on, like stones or low walls, in the not-so-grassy area.
2. A dog park!! We all use the basketball court as a dog park. We need a dog park close by. Please consider adding one in the Braddock interim space next to the post office.
3. Water fountain
4. Bathrooms and water fountain. Sandbox
5. Make a Pet Friendly Space

Note: There is community interest in a fenced dog area in Hunter Miller Park, however, the Dog Park Master Plan states that a fenced dog area must be a minimum of ½ acre and 50 ft. from a residential, commercial, or industrial property. It is not possible to meet these requirements in this park. An update to the Citywide Dog Park Master Plan (developed in 2000) will re-evaluate the dog area criteria described above.

## Community Feedback

In Fall 2018, staff collected community feedback to understand how the park is used and how it could be improved in the future. The following information summarizes what we heard through an online survey and community workshop. Over 400 people responded to the survey in total, 11 of which were specific to Hunter Miller Park. Staff used the collected information to develop the draft park plans.

## In 10 years, I would like this Park to...

(Top 3 rankings shown, based on a weighted score)

1. *Be a safe place for children to explore*
2. *Be a place to create social connections with neighbors*
3. *Be a place to relax*



The image above is an example of a “swing with me” swing which allows multiple people to play together, including multiple generations. “Swing with me” swings allows for users to see eye-to-eye and they can also be used by only one users.

# Hunter Miller Park

Which of the following existing proposed park elements do you love, like, or not like?					
Recommendation Swings Number of responses 15			Recommendation Benches Number of responses 14		
Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
I love it!	4	27	I love it!	10	71
I like it	6	40	I like it	2	14
I don't like it	5	33	I don't like it	2	14
Recommendation Park welcome sign Number of responses 14			Recommendation Water fountain Number of responses 14		
Value	Count	Percent	Value	Count	Percent
I love it!	6	43	I love it!	10	71
I like it	8	57	I like it	3	21
I don't like it	0	0	I don't like it	1	7
Recommendation Utility box Number of responses 14					
Value	Count	Percent			
I love it!	3	21			
I like it	8	57			
I don't like it	3	21			

## Improvement Recommendations

### 1 Replace the bucket swings

Community feedback indicated that there is a need for both bucket swings for toddlers and swings for older children. Given the limited space in this park, this plan suggests replacing the bucket swings with "swing with me" swings similar to those already installed in other parks in the City, such as Beverly Park and Potomac Yard Park. These swings can each be used by one or two people and will allow children of all ages to use the swings.

### 2 Add additional benches

Install additional benches in the park along the fence line and in the shaded area in the center of the park between the two play areas.

### 3 Add a water fountain

Install a drinking fountain to provide drinking water inside the park.

### 4 Update park signage

The existing park welcome sign will be updated to the current standard.

### 5 Cover utility box with mylar patterned cover

Similar to the traffic control box wraps project conducted throughout the City in 2015 and 2016, cover the existing green utility box with a patterned wrap.



In the summer of 2019 RPCA staff collected community feedback on the draft recommendations for improving this pocket park. The following information summarizes what was heard through online surveys and community feedback (see appendix for full results). Over 700 responses were collected in total, 15 of which were specific to Hunter Miller Park.

Based on information from the summer input phase, staff updated the plan to best represent current and future community needs. A major change from the draft plan is the additional recommendation of reevaluating the distances within the playground to see if there is room for additional climbing structures while also maintaining the appropriate use areas distances requirements.

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## Improvement Recommendations

### 1 Replace the bucket swings

Community feedback indicated that there is a need for both bucket swings for toddlers and swings for older children. Given the limited space in this park, replace the bucket swings with "swing with me" swings similar to those installed in other parks in the City, such as Beverly Park and Potomac Yard Park. These swings can each be used by one or two people and will allow children of all ages to use the swings.

### 2 Add additional benches

Install additional benches in the park along the fence line and in the shaded area in the center of the park between the two play areas.

### 3 Add a water fountain

Install a drinking fountain/bottle filler to provide drinking water inside the park.

### 4 Update park signage

Update the existing park welcome sign to the current city standard.

### 5 Cover utility box with mylar patterned cover

Cover the existing green utility box with a patterned wrap, similar to the traffic control box wraps project conducted throughout the City in 2015 and 2016.

### 6 Evaluate playground for the addition of a climbing structure

Community feedback indicated a desire for climbing features. Evaluate the distances in the playground to see if there is room to fit a climbing structure.

### 7 Update existing playground and provide shade

The current playground includes outdated play equipment. Community feedback indicated a desire for shade in this park. Install a shade structure, such as a shade sail, as part of the playground renovation to provide shade to the park.



### Recommendations and Rankings

Recommendation	Ranking	Cost
Swings		
Benches		
Water fountain		
Park Signage		
Utility box		
Evaluate playground distances		